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Gerlovina-Berghash-Gerlovin

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# ON EXHIBIT

April 9 through May 13

## PHOTEMS

A Collaboration Between

**Rimma Gerlovina -**

Three Dimensional Poet

**Mark Berghash -** Photographer

**Valeriy Gerlovin -** Sculpture

Also Featuring:

Sculpture, Words and Books by

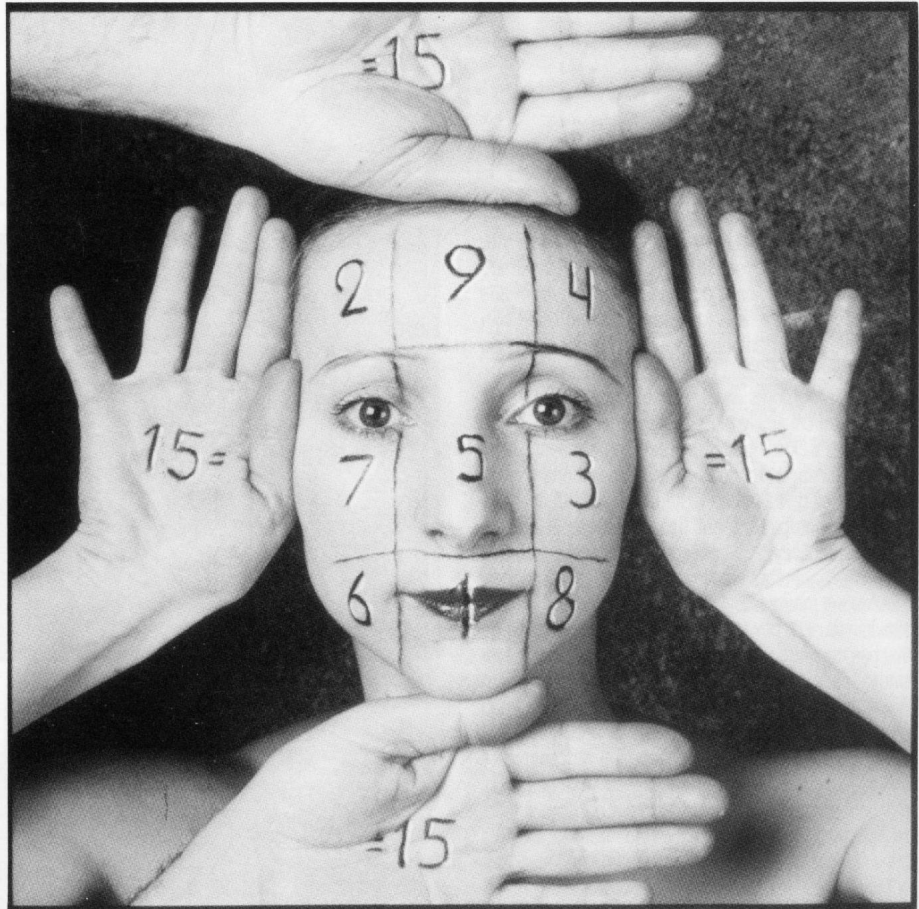
**RIMMA GERLOVINA and VALERIY**

**GERLOVIN**

## THE WHOLE HOLE

An Installation, Pinhole Photographs and

Cameras by **JOE BABCOCK**



## Photems Or: A History of the World in Five Parts

*"The challenge now is to be highly creative in a monotonous conservative period."*

**Photems** are a hybrid form of photography, the result of a "loaves and fishes collaboration between three conceptual artists,"<sup>2</sup> Rimma Gerlovina, Mark Berghash and Valeriy Gerlovin. A melding of the symbols of Gerlovina's three dimensional poetry, Berghash's photography and Gerlovin's sculptural and painting skills, **photems** "emerge from a fusion of artistic and philosophical polarities"<sup>3</sup>, and may be best understood by excavating history for clues.

### I. The Construction of Reality

Until the invention of photography, language, the naming of things, was the primary structure used for ordering the environment. By means of language, the objects of the natural world are identified for their use-value. The natural is transformed through language into the cultural, and the world of things becomes recognizable within an ordered system of relationships that is perceived as "real". This system of relationships between things, "reality", is not based upon any natural order, but, again, upon the relationship of the use-value of things to the

culture which names them. Through language, we come to identify reality.

The perception of reality, our common frame of reference, is contingent upon our acceptance of the series of historical linguistic constructions by which it is identified. When grouped together such constructions give form to meaning in the sense that through the juxtaposition of words objects are distinguishable from one another. Yet meaning, like reality, is contingent upon the constructions of which it is formed. Not only must we accept the construction of reality in order to identify it, but, in order to cling to it, to be within it, we must also repress our awareness of its contingency. To be aware of the contingency of reality is to deny its existence. To deny the existence of reality is to reject history, the sequence of political and economic events through which a culture defines itself.

### II. The First Deconstruction

The transformation of language, such that the contingency of reality is revealed, and thus undermined, has been practiced through the centuries. It is recorded that in primitive clans the shaman often spoke or enacted the reverse of his or her meaning, answering yes when no was intended, moving forward when told to go back. The shaman's action was a reenactment of the sacred time before time, of the disorder that preceded order. The awareness of reality is not complete without the

awareness of its opposite.

The shaman lived at the intersection of sacred and profane time, the "point of origin". The wisdom of the shaman found expression in festivals and rites of initiation, during which the sacrality of objects and times was reactualized. During the festivals, the primitive clan existed with the shaman in sacred time. Awareness of use-value, by means of which of objects in the world are distinguished from one another, was replaced by awareness of their sacred value. Profane time, the cultural order, was dissolved.

"Contrasts dissolved at the point of origin. The initiate experiences how unique things, which had appeared to him as **distinct** when he was not initiated yet, are one in reality, that is, in the origin... The initiate also experiences on the level of his body that 'this here,' something that to the non-initiated seems to be distinct, is one with itself in the origin... Within the perspective of the origin, ngarungani, the 'dreamtime', differences dissolve."<sup>4</sup>

The dissolution of difference, as actualized through the reversal of order, revitalized the everyday activities of the clan by reaffirming their origin as imitations of divine models.<sup>5</sup> Cultural order, therefore, understood by the clan to be based upon divine order, was reified in the course of the religious festivals. In the course of history the role of the shaman has been transferred to the priest, but the activity of the priest has remained the perpetuation of the imitation of divine order.

### III. The Russian Experiment

In the early 1900s, Russian artists seeking a new society struggled to overthrow cultural order through a rejection of linguistic constructions. In 1912, a small book titled **Poshchecina obshchestvennomu vkusu** (A Slap in the Face of Public Taste) appeared in Moscow, with texts by a group of artists and poets, including, among others, D. and N. Burljuk, Vasili Kandinsky, and Vladimir Maiakovsky. Attacking celebrated authors and their masterworks, this group demanded that the new society "Throw Pushkin, Dostevsky, Tolstoi, et. al. overboard from the Ship of Modernity. Modern poets, they argued, must be granted four basic rights:

- (1) to enlarge vocabulary in its scope with arbitrary and derivative words (creation of new words);
- (2) to feel an insurmountable hatred for the language existing before them;
- (3) to put aside in horror, from our proud brow, the dirt-cheap fame, which you have fashioned from bath house **veniks** ("swishes");
- (4) to stand on the solid block of the word "we" amid the sea of boos and indignation."<sup>6</sup>

A new linguistic system known as **zaum** (from "za," meaning beyond, and "urn," meaning mind or reason) was created by Alexandr Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, two exponents of Russian Futurism. "Zaum aimed at the development of a universal language based on pure abstract ideas expressed either by separate sounds of language or by meaningless combinations of existing phonemes... Zaum ultimately replaced verbal description with verbal 'texture' and provided the means for denying the traditional narrative and decorative functions of word and image that had governed Russian Classicism."<sup>7</sup> The linguistic concept zaum was extended to visual forms in the concept of **sdvig**, or dislocation, with the result that occasionally uniden-

tifiable fragments of figures or objects were represented in the work of art entirely separated from the whole.

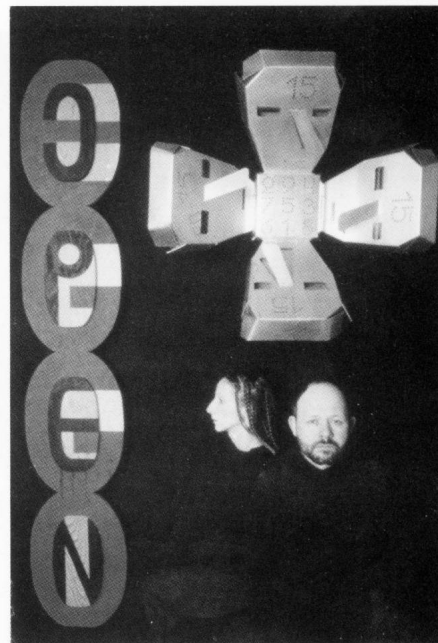
Without entirely dismissing the relationship of spirituality to art, one specific aspect of traditional culture which pre-revolutionary artists sought to dismantle was the powerful force of the church. The transition from pre-revolutionary to post-revolutionary society demanded the destruction of the idea of cultural order as an imitation of divine order. This destruction is notable because it marks the first attempt, after the triumph of Christianity, of a culture to establish an order based upon mythologies of its own creation. That this order was to be constructed largely through the activities of artists indicates as well a profound, if short lived, change in the status of the artist.

By dismantling the structures of language and image, writers, poets and artists sought to redefine life through art. In the post-revolutionary period, their activities were given official sanction. Artists sought to realize their goal through collaboration, especially through the participation of the audience. By making the masses a part of their revolutionary program, by instructing them in the language of the new order, large numbers of people were made aware of the contingency of the traditional order. Only through their awareness of this contingency could the destruction of pre-revolutionary order be achieved.

The fervor of post-revolutionary optimism and experimentation was finally crushed by an increasingly unenthusiastic public which, in common with Stalin's new regime, preferred a more straight-forward approach to art and literature. In 1934, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party demanded the exclusive practice of Socialist Realism, "the depiction of reality in its revolutionary development..."<sup>8</sup> The revolutionary redefinition of life had occurred; the time dismantling the old reality had ended, and the time for art and literature to resume their traditional ideological function, of making real the new order, had begun.

### IV. The Science of Signs

Much recent work in the field of photography has focused on the relationship of the photographic image of the ordering structure of language. Taking as a point of origin Walter Benjamin's classic essay, "The Work

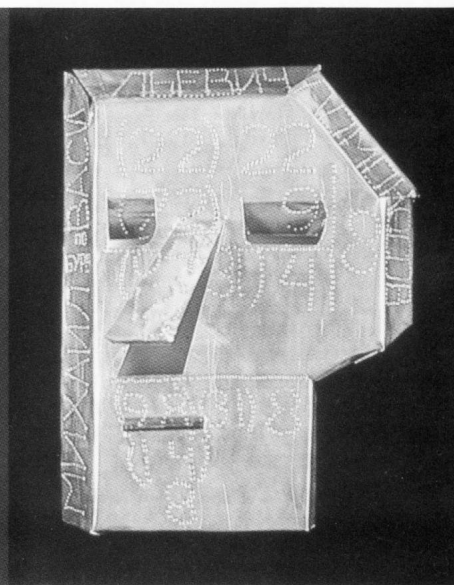
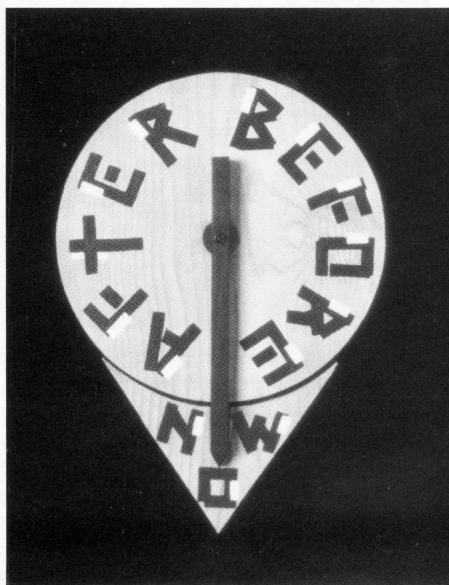


of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," this work has three goals: 1) identification of the two modes of reception of art, differentiated by Benjamin as "cult value" (originating in the relationship of the work of art to ritual, magic or religion) and "exhibition value" (originating in the isolation of the work of art from its cult function) of reifying cultural values; and 3) identifying the contingency of the cultural values which the "cult value" of the work of art camouflages.

Like his contemporaries in the Soviet Union, Benjamin was eager for the de-sacralization of the work of art, and with it the dismantling of cultural order.

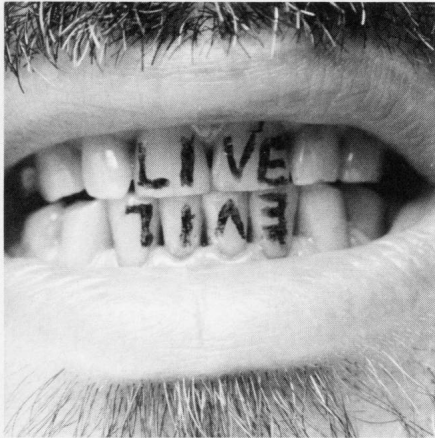
"... Benjamin saw the nineteenth century's perfection of technically precise reproduction media such as photography and film the opportunity not only to prise art from its cultural constraints, but to transform radically its tradi-

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tional functions. As the singular original gave way to a plurality of increasingly precise copies, so would the previously unbridgeable gap between art and its audience give way to universal availability and accessibility. Hence, Benjamin anticipated a 'dissolution' of the aura, of proliferation of meanings, in short a tremendous shattering of tradition.'<sup>99</sup>

Implicit in these goals is the belief that the photograph has obtained for the modern world the power that was once the exclusive property of language, of representing reality. "This is an important historical reversal," writes Roland Barthes. "The image no longer illustrates the words; it is now words which, structurally, are reproduction, therefore, it is through photographs that we come to identify reality. The acceptance of photographic reality, however, is as dependent upon the suppression of awareness of its contingency as was the acceptance of the linguistic construction of reality.

Like Benjamin, many contemporary theorists in the field of photography seek to "prize art from its cultural constraints" with Marxist-inspired critiques of contemporary culture. Such critiques provide the means for understanding the structures of power through which the realities of a given culture are represented to us (as well as the role of the artist in perpetuating those representations) by analyzing one form of cultural order, or mythology, from the point of view of another. A science of signs (words, images), they are but signposts referring endlessly to other signposts. Order is no longer given form from the reference point of its opposite (sacred order), but, instead, from the order of the Other (secular order).

In this science of signs referring endlessly back to itself, the desacralization of art is effected by identifying its use-value through the rejection of its "cult-value." With Benjamin as the new secular point of origin and "exhibition value" the new point of reference giving form to meaning, the sacred point of origin disappears without a trace. Suppressing the contingency of this rejection, contemporary theorists present this new point of origin as already "given." Although signs prove highly analyzable from this perspective, order remains, nevertheless, strictly enforced. The need for meaning is finally obliterated by the "given" of meaninglessness, and alienation is its only possible replacement.

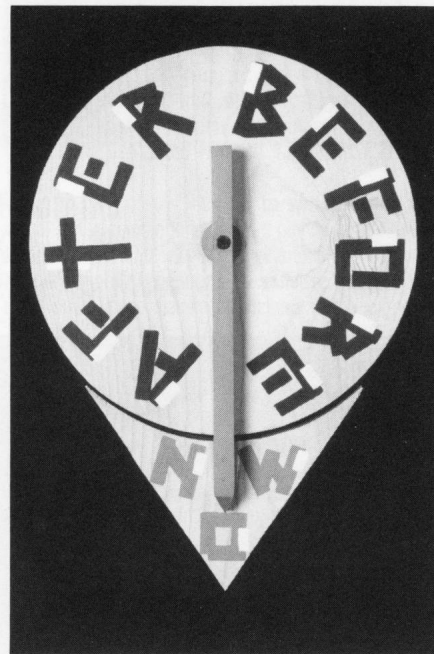
The idea of the artist as shaman has been transformed to meet the needs of the times. The self indulgent antics practiced by contemporary artists like Kiefer and Schnabel, their alleged fascination with fascism and

mythology, are effective only as reinforcements of alienation. Far from a re-evaluation of history, the agenda behind which so much contemporary art hides, the artist of today re-interprets the events of the past only in so far as they are capable of being revised to conform to present thinking. This persuasive program seeks to suppress all other possibilities by reproducing perfectly and repeatedly the ideology from which it is molded. Deeply rooted in the goals of individualist consumer culture, the ideology implicit in such practices demands that we reject the past as failure; only the future can offer fulfillment. The artist of the new order is just about as interested in the mythical as was the Soviet artist faced with the command of Socialist Realism.

#### V. (Finally) Photems

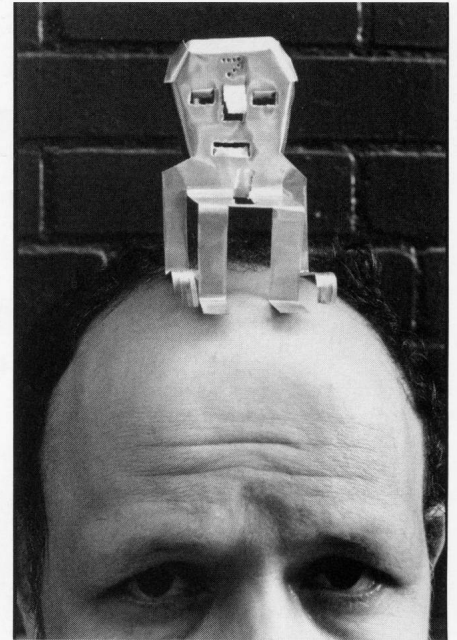
Photems propose a re-investigation of the mythical in art. The name is derived from the words Pho(tography) and (To)tems, and the activity, a "fishes and loaves collaboration," refers to a New Testament miracle. Shortly before walking on the water, Jesus went into "a desert place" with his disciples, and spoke there with a crowd of five thousand. At the end of the day, when it was time to eat, the disciples could come up with only five loaves and two small fish. But after Jesus had given thanks for the loaves and fishes, distributed them and all had eaten "as much as they would," twelve baskets of crumbs were collected.

The reference to this story is significant because Rimma and Valeriy Gerlovin are Russian immigrants. Looked upon unfavorably in their own country, they came to a desert place. There, in an act of communion (collaboration) with another artist, what little they had each



brought them was transformed through the act of giving into more than enough.

The reference to totemism is equally significant. Totemism was, at one time, believed to represent the original form of religion. The totem, an image both animal and human, designated the animal ancestor whose name the human clan shared. The totem pole evolved as a genealogical record, depicting the mythological relationship between the ancestral animal



and the clan. The pole, a descendant of the "axis mundi" or world tree, symbolized the meeting point of heaven and earth, the sacred point of origin.

It was often in the presence of the tree that the members of the clan celebrated their festivals, reactualizing their connection to mythical time. As clans became settled and individuals within the clan took or were chosen for specific functions, however, the sacred tree became the property of the shaman. In the shamanistic vision, the tree is characteristically represented as growing upside down. On one end, the tree reaches into the heavens, and on the other, into the navel and uterus of the earth. The tree is the source of shamanic wisdom.

In 1977, the Gerlovins collaborated with Igor Makarevich in Moscow to produce a photographic book titled "Trees, or How to Photograph Dreams." The viewer is instructed through diagrams, text and documentation of the artists' experiments, or how one or more people may select and embody themselves in a dream image which, upon waking, may be recorded by a photographer. In this series, the viewer is invited to enter and to become one with the dreamtime through the selected image; "you will gradually fill its space, the image and the environment will fit you as if it were clothing."<sup>13</sup> The dream image into which the Gerlovins entered was the tree.

Prior to their work with Berghash, the Gerlovins produced several series of sculptural works evocative of the shamanic disruption of order, among them a set of upside down and backwards ladders with human bodies painted on them (Valeriy) and wooden works with words or phrases which, through the intervention of the viewer, changed meaning (Rimma). By moving a small panel, the words on a human shaped sculpture changed from "Sun Set" to "Sin Sweet." On a clock built in Moscow in 1976, the order of time is jumbled. In "Absolute Clock," constructed ten years later, a single hand marked "Now" swings between "Before" and "After

The extensive use of language in the Gerlovin's works is evocative of the metalinguistic experimentation of Russian artists in the pre-revolutionary period who sought to create new meaning in literary and visual forms through **zaim** (trans-rational language) and **sdvig**

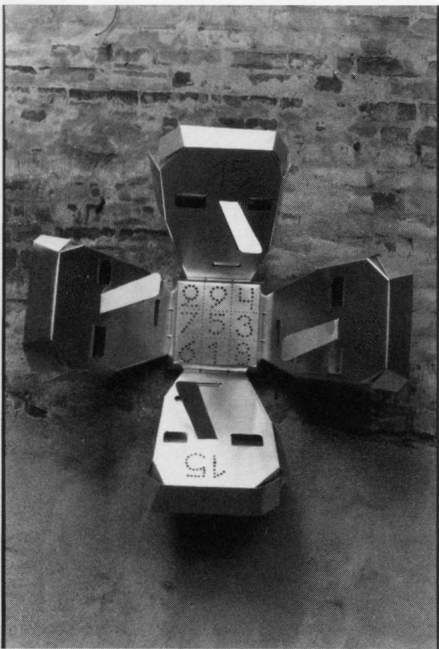


(visual dislocation). Berghash's earlier work with multi-image nudes and portraits, reveals a concern for fragmentation similarly related to those experiments. In contrast to the goals of those artists, who sought a dis-integration of order, the collaborative effort of Gerlovina, Berghash and Gerlovin seeks its reintegration.

**Photems** propose the reconstruction of archetypal symbols through a return to the point of origin, where order and difference dissolve. In contrast with contemporary artists and theorists whose work seeks to dismantle meaning altogether, Gerlovina, Berghash and Gerlovin offer the possibility that order and meaning possess potential beyond the cultural.

"The artist(s) view art not as a random mixture of elements, but as synoptic; an organic union of interrelated parts whose balance — as in any living organism - is important to maintain. The images in **Photems** emerge from a fusion of artistic and philosophical polarities... their conceptualism evolves beyond dry objectivity"<sup>14</sup>

In **Photems**, the structures for recognizing order, from the tree to the word, from the word to the destruction of the word, from the destruction of the word to the photograph, are understood as having undergone an historical transition from sacred to secular. The photograph is understood as possessing the power of mirroring, of representing and reifying, that order. Much contemporary art seeks to identify the imbalance of secular order by contrasting it with other equally corrupt forms, and by identifying it exclusively with the economic and political events of the day. While this effort reveals much about our world, it fails to fulfill



our "devouring" need for meaning; we are shown what is missing from our culture, but never how it can be restored. Such work solidifies the belief that imbalance, meaninglessness and alienation constitute the natural order of the world. The particular significance of **photems** is their outright rejection of this belief, and the subsequent restoration of balance that they propose.

**Photems** re-introduce archaic symbols long absent from cultural representations. Joining the visual with the linguistic, meanings immediately apparent in

**photems** dissolve quickly as others are formed. As with much of their earlier work, and in common with post-revolutionary Soviet artists who recognize that the creation of a new order was a process dependent upon the mass-awareness of the contingency of any ordering structure, the artists require that the viewer act as intermediary in the process of the construction of "photemic" meaning. The transformation of a word is effected by reading it backwards, or by recognizing its significance in relation to other words or objects in the image. Constant reference to the balancing principles of the Tibetan magic square and the mandala reinforce the intent of these images, that the order of nature transcends culture, and that meaning is to be found only in the act of transcendence.

"The shaman's function is to balance and center society, integrating many planes of life-experience, and defining the culture's relationship to the cosmos."<sup>15</sup> **Photems** are representative of neither truth nor reality, but must be recognized instead as offering the example of an available process. **Photems** offer a process for the revitalization of meaning in a meaningless world by means of which the viewer, responding to the invitation of the artist, may seek restoration to the cosmos, a return to the divine order.

- John P. Jacob  
Austin, TX 1988

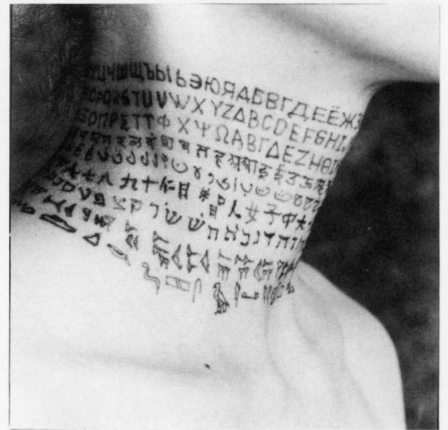
John P. Jacob, an artist, curator and writer who has worked extensively with artists in Eastern Europe, is presently preparing an exhibition of contemporary photography from the Soviet Union.

- 1: *Russian Samizdat Art* Doria, C. ed. Willis Locker & Owens Publishing, NY 1986 "Samizdat Art," Gerlovin R & V, p. 80.
- 2: *Photems Artists'* text.
- 3: *Ibid*
- 4: *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilization* Duerr, Hans P. Basil Blackwell Inc., NY 1985 p. 73
- 5: *The Sacred and the Profane* Eliade, Mircea. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. NY 1957
- 6: *The Avant-Garde in Russia, 1910-1930: New Perspectives* Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Ca & MIT Press, Ma, 1986 Barron S. & Tuchman M., eds. "The Ins and Outs of Russian Avant-Garde Books: A History, 1910-1930" p. 102
- 7: *Ibid*, p. 103
- 8: *Ibid*, p. 109
- 9: *October: The First Decade, 1976-1986* Michelson, A, Krauss, R, Crimp, D eds. MIT Press, Ma 1987. "The Judgement Seat of Photography" Phillips, Christopher. p 259
- 10: **Image, Music, Text** Barthes, Roland. Hill & Wang, NY. "The Photographic Message" p. 25
- 11: *Has Modernism Failed?* Gablik, Suzi. Thames & Hudson, 1984. p. 90
- 12: *Trees Artists'* text.
- 13: *Photems Artists'* text.
- 14: *Has Modernism Failed?* op. cit. p. 126

## THE GERLOVINS

The spectator can touch *The Constitution*; moreover, he can make - like one of the Founding Fathers.

This wood construction consists of shifting panels on which are inscribed different Latin-derived root words,



suffices and prefixes. As a result of shifting them the statuary words like *con-stitut-ion*, *prostitution* or *restitut-ion* are composed. The Founding Father/viewer can manipulate these modules, moving them back and forth, up or down, creating text combinations with different semantic connotations. In short, any constitution is elastic - it can be shortened, lengthened, changed, transformed - still it lacks real substance.

*The Constitution* is one of the Russian artist Rimma Gerlovina's conceptual sculptures showing at CEPA.

The artists who work together were born in the Soviet Union and have been living in New York City since 1980. In Moscow they were active participants in the underground Samizdat Art movement, working within the traditions of Conceptualism and Russian Constructivism. Many of their works were smuggled out of the Soviet Union to be exhibited in Europe and the United States - at the Venice Biennial; the Bohum Museum, West Germany; and the Herbert F Johnston Museum, Ithaca. In New York the artists organized "The Russian Samizdat Art" exhibition which traveled throughout the United States and Canada. Their work was included in the United States exhibit at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Politics in Mexico City.

Valeriy Gerlovin is preoccupied with the magic of numbers and with the creation of conceptual images that revolve around the basic theme of freedom versus determinism.

In his works cut of large sheets of aluminum, Gerlovin assembles and folds figures and faces like origami into a multitude of entities, each of which is visually the

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(continued from page 21)

same: a mechanical Metropolis of human sameness. Their geometric forms release them from human signification, emphasizing seriality and interchangeability, like an animal farm populated by Pavlovian dogs.

Numbers are punched through the figures; the varied arrangements on their faces provide the only individualization of these otherwise identical citizens of this Metropolis. The works are based on the principle of a magic square in which three rows of three numbers add up to fifteen in any direction - vertically, horizontally or diagonally. The artist conceives those numbers as metaphysical axioms or units of destiny — life is numbered, that is, predetermined free choice, and each number has a different and specific meaning. Valeriy explains his system as a paradigm of creation from one to ten, in which ten is a turning point of all countings, return to completeness and unity of one but on higher octave.

In this system, the human being is assessed a certain number, and he acts and lives according to the intrinsic meaning of that number. He responds to his own number, and that response negates conformity and the mechanical seriality of life.

The numbers are not only a means of reconciliation between nothingness and identity, or of concealment of the void, but are also signs of meaning that abolish nothingness, postulating the very notion of diversity, recovering and amplifying the purpose inherent in human life. The sitting figure of "Chairman" is a centaur of a chair and a man with the popping-up sexual symbol, so it is hardly can be used as a chair.

The conceptualist works of Valeriy Gerlovin are built upon a synthesis of the formal and literal, basic geometrical form-elements derived from the form-language of Russian Constructivism and Suprematism. In the same way that one may enjoy aesthetically Malevich's squares without taking into consideration his metaphysical ideas about the square, one can appreciate Valeriy Gerlovin's conceptual form-images without entirely relying on the liberating power of numbers.

Rimma Gerlovina has a background as a linguist and is both a writer and visual artist. Her sensitivity to linguistic possibilities are manifest in her conceptualist works. All of her pieces are constructed of honeycombed plywood - like biological organisms whose recesses contain movable cubes on which different letter or words are written. These cubes are elementary units of meaning, and the relationship between them and their containing structure is that between word and sentence/text.

In their recently published book *Russian Samizdat Art* (New York, 1986, Willis Locker & Ownes) the artists describe the cubical structures in the following manner: Each cube is an allegorical unit of time, space or human character and experience, a basic iconographic as well as meaning element of a semiotic environment. "The molecular cube structure has been arranged into large cube poems. A two-meter-high man made of cubes with inscriptions covering single concepts (from genius to lack of talent, or from saint to devil, and so on) is formed by the viewer himself, who at that moment is, in a sense, writing his random poetry. This series also includes a *Calendar for a 100 Years* in the form of a dog sphinx, which the viewer uses to predict the future by means of movable cubes. *The Wandering Jew* is a soft cube that wanders across a

world map shaped as a prostrate human figure. A special hero, the transvestite, with interchangeable sex symbols, appears in many different cubic sculptures. In her cubes poems Rimma [Gerlovina] developed her theory of *Transfism* with the following theses: 1. Interchangeability (of time, space, sex, etc., as a basic principle of life, and the unity of opposites) 2. Co-creativity and Pluralism (of the spectator who completes the idea, changing the elements in the frames of the author's form) 3. Metaphoric Game (as a symbolic modeling of the world, as an *a priori* part of human nature) 4. Archetypal Units (cubes together make a perfect unity)".

The viewer can manipulate the cubes by moving them or turning them around, creating thereby different poems, messages and meanings. By turning over the cubes the spectator is supposed to create his own variant, to project his own experience or intentions. The changes involve a decision and a game by the spectator, that is, participation in the object itself. He becomes involved in the conceptual process by altering the meaning of the work. He is invited and involved in a signifying game. *Homo ludens* — the playing man — is also *Homo significans*. In a way not dissimilar to a Rorschach test he creates a visual text and a meaning-structure that corresponds to his personality.

These installations are both form and conceptualist activity, as well as manipulated manifestations of certain form-units and certain associations. The conceptualist activity involves two operations - dissection and articulation. To dissect or to disassemble is to find in the installation certain mobile fragments whose differential situation engenders a certain meaning. The slightest variation in their configuration produces a change in the whole. Cubes - the elementary form-units of meaning and time and life — are a reservoir from which the spectator can summon by an act or rearrangement, or by conquest of chance, the new object which he wishes to endow with a different meaning. The elementary units are distributed and fixed in the continuity of the installation which is basically the activity of articulation. This activity is also a matter of participation and is facilitated by the fact that the elementary units have certain affinities - the same shape of a square - and certain dissimilarities — the letters or signs inscribed on them.

There is an interconnectedness between the flow of time and the flow of life; and the cubes and their configurations are conceived to be figural and conceptual equivalencies of that flow. By moving and rearranging the cubes the spectator is also creating his own version of that flow. An excellent illustration of the conceptualization of the life/time flow is the work *Hagiography of Man*, which is a life story in a sequence of scenes that appear on the component blocks of a figure. Life appears here to be a memory storage, the underlying concept that it can be recalled by participation in the art object. Memories may also be summoned forth by manipulating components in the works *Life Cycle*, *Pregnant Woman* and *Absolute Clock*.

Other works are organized around and visually express concepts of Ambiguity, Relativism and Transcendence. *Depraved Element* (one of the earliest works, Moscow 1974) is a white cube, part of which is a smaller red cube inserted into the upper corner of the larger one. The red cube, called a 'depraved element,' is also necessary in order for the large cube to retain its cubical configuration. Without that element the large cube is

another different-from-itself form. And to become itself is to incorporate the depraved element. She explains: every truth has an attractive grain of mistake and every mistake has a grain of truth.

On the whole Rimma Gerlovina's works can be seen as an archaeology and reconstruction of living experiences, of *Lebenswelt*.

An experience of life is not based on one encounter but brings together events of various kinds, times and places; their unity of meanings as lived experience lifts them out of the stream of life and holds them together in a unit of meaning, that is, a lived experience or to quote Wilhelm Dilthey: "That which in the stream of time forms a unity in the present because it has a unitary meaning is the smallest entity which we can designate as an experience. One may call each encompassing unity of parts of life bound together through a common meaning for the course of life an 'experience' — even when the several parts are separated from each other by interrupting events."

I think that in Rimma Gerlovina's works one may find a strong interest toward hermeneutical understanding and interpretation of living experiences, the works themselves a kind of memory storage. The interpretation, in most cases, is situational and contextual, once defined meaning can be re-arranged by each subsequent spectator simply by re-arranging the cubes, by moving them around in the installation.

Unlike the original Russian Constructivism concerned with the pure function, the preoccupation with hermeneutical understanding the meaning-structure of *Lebenswelt* modifies the constructivist-conceptualist idiom of the works.

During the early Russian Avant-Garde, Italian Futurism (whose elements include glorification of pure technology and exclusion of all human subjectivity), when interpreted in Russia as in the case of Ego-Futurism, was modified and enriched by the emphasis on the subjective presence of the individual in the technological and social change. By analogy I can call the works of Valeriy and Rimma Gerlovin Conceptualist Ego-Constructivism.

— Dr. Nikolai von Kreitor

New York, NY 1988